

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A method of rapidly obtaining geospatial data, processing the geospatial data, and disseminating the geospatial data to at least one ultimate user, comprising the steps of:

obtaining digital data corresponding to geospatial images from a downward looking collection platform, and transmitting the digital data to the earth;

receiving transmitted digitized data, generating communication signals corresponding to the digitized geospatial data, and transmitting the communication signals over a communications channel;

receiving the communication signals at a data processor coupled to the communications channel;

converting the communication signals to digitized data;

selectively modifying the digitized data by adding data derived from at least one other source; and

transmitting modified digitized data through the communications channel to a user.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the steps of transmitting and receiving communications signals and transmitting modified digitized data through a communications channel include the further step of transmitting and receiving the communications signals and transmitting the modified digitized data over the Internet.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of transmitting modified digitized data to an ultimate user includes the further steps of:

transmitting modified digitized data through the communications channel to a radiant energy transmitter;

transmitting the modified digitized data to a commercial communications satellite in the form of radiant energy; and

retransmitting the modified digitized data as radiant energy to a radiant energy receiver located remotely from the point of retransmission, wherein the radiant energy receiver is proximate the ultimate user of the geospatial data.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of obtaining digital data corresponding to geospatial images from a downward looking collection platform, and transmitting the digital data to the earth comprises the further step of transmitting the digital data to the earth in radiant energy form.

5. The method according to claim 1, comprising the further steps of:

providing an output device capable of receiving and processing the modified digitized data;

causing the output device to receive and process the modified digitized data; and

generating a visual output representative of modified geospatial images by the output device.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein said step of providing an output device comprises the further step of providing a computer and an operably associated monitor, and wherein said step of generating a visual output comprises the further step of generating a visual image on the monitor.

7. The method according to claim 5, wherein said step of selectively modifying the digitized data comprises the further step of compressing the digitized data, and said step of causing said output device to receive and process the modified digitized data comprises the further step of decompressing the digitized data.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of selectively modifying the digitized data comprises the further step of geocoding the digitized data, wherein pixel locations of at least one image are correlated with corresponding geographic locations on the globe in a manner enabling each image to be identified as to geographic location when the image is retrieved from the digitized data and is reproduced in visible format.

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of selectively modifying the digitized data includes the further steps of

subsequently adding stored data derived from a source other than the aerial view source to the digitized data in a manner enabling visual comparison between an image captured by the aerial view source and the stored data, and

generating an image from the digitized data which image includes both data corresponding to geospatial images obtained from the downward looking collection platform and also subsequently added stored data.

10. The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of selectively modifying the digitized data includes a further step of orthorectifying images captured by the aerial view source.

11. The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of obtaining geospatial images from an aerial view source comprises the further step of obtaining geospatial images from a commercial imagery satellite.

12. The method according to claim 1, including further steps of:

providing a guidable image acquisition platform capable of ; and

providing guidance to the image acquisition platform prior to obtaining digital data corresponding to geospatial images.

13. The method according to claim 1, including the further step of applying prescriptive data to a commercial operation.

14. Apparatus for rapidly obtaining geospatial data, processing the geospatial data, and disseminating the geospatial data to at least one ultimate user, comprising:

an aerial view source of geospatial images having a first transmitter, disposed to obtain geospatial images, to render the geospatial images as digital data, and to transmit the digital data in radiant energy form to the earth;

a first radiant energy receiver located remotely from said aerial view source, disposed to receive digital data from said aerial view source, to generate corresponding communication signals, and to transmit the communications signals;

a communications channel disposed in communicable relation to said radiant energy receiver; and

a data processor communicably connected to said communications channel, disposed to receive the communications signals, to selectively modify the digitized data, and to transmit selectively modified data to a user.

15. The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said communications channel includes the Internet.

16. The apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising:

an output device communicably coupled to said communications channel, disposed to render the selectively modified digital data in a graphical form.

17. The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said output device includes a computer and an operably associated monitor.

18. The apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising:

a transmitter communicably coupled to the communications channel, disposed to transmit the selectively modified digitized data to a commercial communications satellite in the form of radiant energy; and

a second radiant energy receiver located remotely from said data processor, disposed to receive the selectively modified digital data as radiant energy signals from the commercial communications satellite, and an output device communicably connected to said second radiant energy receiver, disposed to render the digital data in visible form.

19. The apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said output device includes a computer and an operably associated monitor.

20. The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said aerial view source of geospatial images is an imagery satellite incorporating a digital camera, disposed in earth orbit.